

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE **13**

BOSTON GLOBE  
3 July 1985

# Another victim of terrorism — a little

**ROBERT HEALY**

WASHINGTON — Terrorism will take its toll on American freedom. Although civilians are not ready to turn the nation over to the military, the defense contractors, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, most of the members of Congress are.

Freedom itself is a risk, but it is a better bet than all the other risks.

There are good reasons for taking security measures in the capital. In our time, John Kennedy was assassinated, Ronald Reagan was shot, and there were attempts made on the life of Gerald Ford.

Concrete barriers have been placed around the White House. Since at least the time of the Libyan terrorist threat, there have been soldiers with rockets atop the White House. The street separating the Treasury from the White House has been closed and there is even talk of closing Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House to traffic.

The Secret Service is always a reflection of the president it guards. If the president is annoyed with the public presence, if he doesn't like the press, these things are reflected. The Secret Service, for instance, has been annoyed at the adversarial relationship between reporters and the president.

In Indianapolis recently, the Jaycees walked through metal detectors into the Indiana Convention Hall, but reporters with White House credentials were stopped after going through the detectors and given a body search. Implicit in the search is the message: Don't give the president a hard time.

Some presidents talked about enduring the isolation of the presidency, but some of them have loved the majesty of it.

It must be remembered that the supplier of the pomp and majesty to the presidency is the Department of Defense, beginning with the Marine band playing "Hail to the Chief," to the helicopters and the great white bird, Air Force One.

On Capitol Hill, in the body of the people, the House of Representatives — there are increased police, metal detectors and purse searches. Outside the building are concrete barriers.

All of this creates a certain climate. Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.) discovered this week that the antiterrorist money for the FBI had been cut somewhat by the budget office. He was angry and said he would introduce legislation to correct the matter. When the Senate returns on July

8, there will be very few people who will question any amendment giving the FBI money for fighting terrorism.

In the last two weeks as the House dealt with the Defense authorization bill, and while the terrorists held the American hostages in Beirut, the House voted for a nerve-gas weapon system that has been consistently denied the president by the House in the past.

In the same macho spirit, the House voted for a death penalty for spies in peacetime. The members gave Reagan Star Wars and the new Midgetman missile and permitted the Pentagon to use lie-detector tests on its employees.

The Washington Post quoted a line from a Capitol Hill aide who said: "It's John Wayne day up here."

Perhaps some of those same authorizations would have taken place if there had been no hostage crisis.

But the climate was perfect. The Democrats who have been the checking force for the president's spending on defense no longer want the label of being "soft on defense."

It was at this kind of moment that the Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution giving Lyndon Johnson the right to go to war in Vietnam without a declaration.

There have been those who stood up to presidents — Jeanette Rankin and Ernest Gruening come to mind immediately — but they are rare.

At this stage the president, right or wrong, is the nation and everything it represents. As the late Sam Rayburn, speaker of the House, reminded his colleagues frequently, the battle between presidents and the Congress should end at the water's edge.

That is where we are today. And each time that happens, we lose a bit more freedom.

It is a good time to think about that.

*Robert Healy is the Globe's Washington bureau chief.*